



July 20, 2016

FRCSW Sailor Helps Suicidal Man



Lt. Jordan Walma stands behind his motorcycle used for his daily commute to Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW). Walma, the FRCSW Level II Legal Officer and 400 Division Officer, came to the aid of a distraught individual June 28 while crossing the Coronado Bridge and potentially saved the man's life. Photo by Jim Markle

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SAN DIEGO— While others drove on by, Lt. Jordan Walma had to stop.

“I could tell he was distraught as he was crying as he was walking and I thought, ‘I can’t let this guy go. I need to try something.’” I was in the number one lane and said, ‘Hey, just get on my bike and I’ll give you a ride across the bridge,’” Walma recounted.

Walma, the Level II Legal Officer and 400 Division Officer at Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW), knew something wasn’t right yesterday morning as he rode his motorcycle to work crossing the Coronado Bridge to North Island and he saw someone running from the number two lane toward the bridge’s edge.



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Believing there was an accident he slowed down to anticipate a stopping point of vehicles. That's when he found the lone pedestrian walking toward the mid-span of the bridge.

The man acted erratically and moved from lane to lane in front of traffic, and then to the side of the bridge where he paused to look down at the water; then slowly made his way toward the bridge's high point.

At about 6 a.m. Walma called 9-11 via his motorcycle helmet's Bluetooth to notify authorities.

"I trailed him on the bike just trying to get him to talk to me. Every time we got higher and higher on the bridge span, his pause would get a little bit longer like he was trying to decide if he was going to jump from there, so I just kept following him trying to get closer and closer so in case he jumped, that I might be able to stop him," Walma said.

Cars continued to maneuver past before help from two other Sailors arrived. The female petty officers stopped their car in front of the man, and all traffic came to a stop.

"The driver stayed in the car and the passenger got out. She suggested he get in the car, so I stopped my bike and put my arm around him and told him that things would be okay, and that he should get in the car," Walma said.

"We were in the number two lane, and I was coaxing him away from the bridge when the police arrived. As soon as he saw them, he spun around like he was going to make a run toward the water. He was a slight guy, maybe 5'8" 150 pounds and I didn't see a weapon on him, so I wrapped him up and held on to him until the police could get there."

At 6 feet 3 inches tall, the 44-year-old Walma said he never felt that he was in danger during the almost 10 minute ordeal.



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"He fought a bit and said he would hit me, but I had my helmet on and (motorcycle) padding. When the police arrived, they told me to let him go. So I did. I pointed him toward the middle of the bridge but he spun around and walked to the edge of the bridge where he sat for about a half an hour," Walma said.

"He sat with his hands behind him, to keep him from falling if he leaned too far forward. I was thinking it was more of a cry for help than anything. If you're going to jump, you'd put your hands in front of you so you can push off. There was 15 to 20 feet between him and anybody else. After I let him go I couldn't look anymore. Had he jumped, I would've been the last person he was in contact with."

But he didn't jump, and was eventually coaxed into police custody for the help he desperately needed.

Maybe that's because someone cared enough to stop.

And throughout the chaotic pressure to prevent a potential deadly tragedy, Walma never got the name of the man whose life he very well may have saved.

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